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ABSTRACT

Books have acculturated and perpetuated group social, political, and economic beliefs as well as individual emotions, attitudes, values, and behaviors. Educators must be wary of literature which perpetuates misconceptions, negative impressions, and insensibilities. A review of books which depict members of cultural groups as strong, positive, and heroic, and with respect, integrity, and compassion for their human experience, illustrates the strong potential they offer for enhancing readers' self concept and understanding of fellow humans with different cultural backgrounds. A model and program of positive acculturation through literature, called posacculturation, emerged from a synthesis of research and readings of creative works. The posacccultural process is based upon the specific capacities of literature to acculturate positive values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of Self, Others, and Pluralistic Peoples. It integrates the powers of literature to deepen experiences and create human connections to issues of the times and to all peoples and cultures. It views literature as a performing art capabable of enhancing communication and evoking humanistic interactions. (JD)

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PREPARING TEACHERS FOR MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS: THE ROLES OF LITERATURE AND THE POSACCULTURATION PROCESSES

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PREPARING TEACHERS FOR MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS: THE ROLES OF LITERATURE AND THE POSACCULTURATION PROCESSES

Introduction:

Throughout the ages, literature has proved one of the world's most subtle, yet most powerful, teachers. From the earliest oral tradition, the tacit messages of the storyteller have acculturated some of humankind's most deeply ingrained concepts of Self and Others. One need not search too far to find evidence that the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of great masses of humanity have been strongly influenced by literary works. Consider the untold persons whose lives have been influenced by oral traditional literature, The Bible (1974), Machiavelli's The Prince (1532), Karl Marx's Das Kapital (1867), or Adolph Hitler's Mein Kampf (1924). The list of literary works which have altered human lives might continue indefinitely.

Books have acculturated and perpetuated group social, political, and economic beliefs as well as individual emotions, attitudes, values, and behaviors. Unfortunately, some of those books are narrow, erroneous, and prejudicial. They perpetuate misconceptions, negative impressions, and insensibilities. Their subtle acculturation of role stereotypes, discriminatory attitudes, and injudicious behaviors complicates the human experience.

However, many books are committed to the quest for truth and the becoming of all humanity to full potential. Such literature, C. S. Lewis (1961) tells us, provides knowledge of the Self

and Others, identification with all humanity, and sensitivity to all cultures. It reveals the universal problems, needs, and conflicts of people everywhere. It provides a means of approaching the complexities and realities of life. It makes possible the use of the imagination to enter, know, and appreciate other lives in other places.

It is important that educators become fully cognizant of literature's powers (Lynch, 1983; Pugach and Raths, 1982). More than any other group, educators are in a position to perpetuate the subtle messages, both positive and negative, of literature. Theirs is a formidable responsibility. It is they who will make those curricular decisions essential to the full becoming of the world's youth. They will have the opportunity (1) to intervene with the powers of literature to stereotype and (2) to enhance readers' concepts of Self, Others, and Pluralistic Peoples through that literature which positively acculturates. An investigation of this opportunity is the purpose of this paper.

Review of Research:

The research has yielded both pessimistic and optimistic findings in this area. Since the late sixties and the inception of the New Awareness of Pluralism, studies have shown that young people's views of those different from themselves have been consistently stereotypical (Sims, 1983; Gay, 1978; Cortes, 1983; Banks, 1983; Appleton, 1983). Other studies have concluded that young people commonly visualize those not part of the dominant White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant-Middle-Class in terms of the pejorative

elitism, racism, sexism, and ageism of many of the writers to whom they are exposed (Britton, 1977; Campbell and Wirtenberg, 1980; Dixon, 1977; Freidenberg, 1983). Research conducted by Herbst (1977), Banks (1983), Latimer (1976), and Hall (1974), and the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1978) found that readers infer distorted images of cultures--and themselves as members of those cultures--when surrounded with books and instructional materials that either depict those peoples stereotypically, or invisibly by excluding them altogether. According to Bader (1976), Banks (1984), and Finley (1983), psychological damage results from such depiction.

Authorities are critical of roles played by educators in the transmission of cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs. Baker (1978), Appleton (1983), Koeller (1977), Norton (1983) and Givens (1982) found an alarming paucity of planning devoted to the process of multicultural education accompanied by a plethora of negative attitudes by children toward some cultures. These researchers underlined the need for teachers educated about diverse cultures and curricula which perpetuate respect for pluralistic peoples.

Unfortunately, some studies have concluded that cultural stereotypes are so common and so deeply ingrained during young people's early years that subsequent attempts to change them will be negligible (Drabman, Hammer, Jarvis, 1976). However, a Ford Foundation study indicates that there is an essential malleability of concepts of Self and Others and that change is possible (Guttenberg and Bray, 1976). The authors of this study claim that the educational system can intervene and change behaviors, attitudes, values, and beliefs by modifying the rigidity of visualized

stereotypes. They recommend using literary works and creative expressions which demonstrate that members of all cultures can be competent, accomplished, creative, and desirable. The critical factor is that the intervention be thorough and intense, and that its facilitators be highly skilled in its application.

Throughout the research is strong support for the development of literature programs which acculturate positive concepts of Self and Others. Shirley (1968), Brooks (1950), Berg-Cross (1968), and Banks (1984) reported that students perceived positive changes in their behaviors, beliefs, values, and attitudes of Self and Others as a result of reading specific literature. Other studies concluded that, while reading literature is decidedly influential in changing reader attitudes and beliefs, its impact is intensified when reinforced with critical discussion and creative expression (Aoki, 1981; Aaron and Muench, 1975; Biskin and Hoskisson, 1977; Frankel, 1972; Schwartz, 1973; Fisher, 1965; Ehle, 1983; and Norton, 1982). The results of a three-year research project by Norton, Lawson, and Mohrmann (1981) indicates that children, teachers, and college students can improve their attitudes toward Black, Native, and Hispanic Americans if multicultural literature and activities become a dynamic part of the curriculum and if teachers are educated in selecting, analyzing, and teaching this literature. By contrast, this research shows that merely placing the literature in the classroom, without subsequent interaction, does not change attitudes.

However, the lack of literature capable of positive acculturation is frequently criticized. Schon (1981) contends

that the "overwhelming majority of recent books incessantly repeat the same stereotypes, misconceptions, and insensibilities that were prevalent in the books published in the 1960s and the early 1970s." She is among those authorities emphasizing the need for young people to be exposed to more distinguished books about cultures and peoples, and, more creative processes in using literature to develop positive cultural concepts (Nimet, 1983; Bracken and Wigatuff, 1979, 1981; Schwartz, 1979; Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1980).

Model and Program of Posacculturation:

Synthesizing the findings from the research, this writer merged the communications and creative arts to design a model (Figure I) and program of positive acculturation, called posacculturation, through literature. The posacculturation process is based upon the specific capacities of literature to acculturate positive values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of Self, Others, and Pluralistic Peoples. It integrates the powers of literature to deepen experiences and create human connections to issues of the times and to all peoples and cultures. It views literature as a performing art capable of enhancing communication and evoking humanistic interactions.

At the heart of posacculturation is vicarious participation in the lives of literary characters, especially when those characters are perceived as heroic models. As the reader follows the character's approach to the great human experience and to specific resolution of conflict, those psychological processes

which may lead to identification, emotional and cathartic insights, and change are stimulated. The insights inferred from identification with the literary character might then be applied to similar real life human drama. Conflicts may be resolved, values clarified, understandings developed, by living vicariously the experiences of literary heroines and heroes.

Steps of the Posacculturation Process:

Posacculturation involves three important steps. First, it is important to exercise careful selection of literature. Books chosen for posacculturation must be truthful books written by sensitive authors who dare to confront controversial issues. These books must develop nonstereotyped characters and situations which represent the vast continuum of cultural diversity. Characters must be strong, heroic, realistic, models capable of evoking identification. Each work should exemplify the qualities of fine writing and credibility of content. Care should be taken that the moral dilemma be nonthreatening. The reader's ability to cope with the dilemma without experiencing depression, or rejection of the work, is a vital consideration. Finally, the selection must be edifying without being moralistic or didactic. According to Stewig (1980), when the belief overpowers the characters and what they are doing, the book fails.

Second, critical analysis, directed by an astute facilitator, is essential to stimulate identification with characters. Identification through critical analysis enables the reader to experience insight and change, to diminish a personal sense of

isolation and difference, and, if the character is admired, to elevate esteem of Self and Others. It leads him to satisfy needs, to confront fears, to increase understanding, compassion, and acceptance of human strengths and weaknesses. As questions are explored, new associations are verbalized, new insights and values are evolved. The reader internalizes the book's message and is better prepared to live that message.

Third, creative expressions are essential to the reader's internalization of the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of the character. Such innovative expressions as the following motivate those right brain intuitive-creative insights which lead to left brain analytical conclusions:

(1) Creative Drama. Dramatizing the heroine's or hero's interactions within the plot, or alternatives to less-than-heroic actions, the reader lives the positive values, attitudes, and behaviors to be acculturated.

(2) Role Playing. Playing out conflict resolutions and problem solutions creates a way for the reader to empathize with others and gain greater understanding and tolerance for how others feel and think in different situations.

(3) Pantomime. Telling a story through kinesics, the reader learns to better recognize and empathize with the physical expressions of human emotions and to better understand the characters expressing those emotions.

(4) Puppetry. In creating dialogues, oral-kinesic interpretations, and puppets, the reader experiences the character's philosophy and applies it to resolution of conflicts.

(5) Creative Writing. Transposing a particular scene from prose to drama or poetry, or rewriting an ending, enables the reader to capture the feelings or moods about the specific conflicts and crises involving the character.

Literature of Posacculturation:

The body of literature which might potentially enhance Self, Others, and Pluralistic Peoples is small. However, this small body well depicts members of cultural peoples as strong, positive, and heroic, and with respect, integrity, and compassion for their human potential.

Three major themes are interwoven within this literature: (1) Becoming of Self, (2) Developing Positive Human Relationships, (3) Coping with Change and/or Becoming a Change Agent. These themes influence the reader in three ways. (1) In identifying with heroines and heroes of his own cultural group who are worthy and respected members of society, the reader undergoes a catharsis and begins to esteem himself as more creative and valuable. (2) Through identification with heroic protagonists who represent a cultural group different from his own, the reader experiences those insights which lead to finer sensitivities and more humanistic interactions. (3) Through both types of identification, members of cultural groups, and those who interact with them, can be acculturated in the processes of accepting, coping with, or initiating change. The ultimate objective of posacculturation is the change of values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors which arise from identification and insight.

The literature of posacculturation is found in prose, poetry, and drama; in fiction and nonfiction; in textbooks, trade materials, and periodicals. It includes literature about all cultural minorities as well as that which shows a variety of aspirations, limitations, and human eccentricities. It reflects the complex nature of pluralism, defining an individual's cultural identity in terms of his ethnicity, as well as his socioeconomic level, religion, sex, age, occupation, and organismic capacity. It avoids negative stereotypes, allows readers to appreciate similarities and differences among people, and develops the knowledge that all of us live in a culturally heterogeneous world.

Some of the notable authors who have contributed to this body of literature have made it possible for readers to identify with the problems which minority peoples experience universally--fear, prejudice, loss of identity, sacrifice, loneliness, frustration, alienation. In Sing Down the Moon (1970) Scott O'Dell recreates the Navahos' traumatic three-hundred-mile forced march, "The Long Walk" of 1863, from their homes in idyllic Canyon de Chelly to imprisonment at Fort Sumner. Through the eyes of his heroic protagonist, Bright Morning, he leads the reader to better empathize with the Navaho experience of life and the vital interweaving of home, esteem, and the desire to live.

Nicholasa Mohr's Nilda (1973) recounts the hardships of being Puerto Rican and poor and of the barriers facing women. Graphic accounts of police and social agency prejudice against Puerto Ricans, betrayals, anti-Catholicism, and anti-establishment conflict provide the reader a statement about the Puerto Rican experience in America. Nilda, however, is a survivor in the face

of adversity and the reader can identify with the strength, sensitivity, and intelligence which hold promise for her future.

In The Little Fishes (1967) Erik Haugaard focuses on the beggar children in Naples, Italy, after World War II. This book eloquently relates the eternal truth of the need for humans to develop and live by an ethical code that involves responsibility to one's self and love and understanding of others. After his mother's death, Guido, one of the displaced youths left to wander in the bombed city of Naples, attempts to apply her advice: the two worthwhile things in life are love and strength. Guido, a hero to emulate in many ways, proves that he has both. Mentally and spiritually, he rises above his betrayers and leads several other orphans through the long lines of refugees moving to the North of Italy.

A number of powerfully written books focus on class conflicts in developing the themes of understanding Self and Others, appreciating pluralism, and instigating change. Through one of these books, Eleanor Estes' The Hundred Dresses (1974) the reader might better understand and interact with another person of different socioeconomic position. In this story, a poor Polish girl, Wanda Petronski, desperately seeks acceptance through long fantasy descriptions of her hundred dresses. Because she wears the same faded dress each day and has different mannerisms, she is the object of her peers' derision. Almost too late, her taunters discover her dresses to be one hundred fine drawings and form a new appreciation of her.

Similarly, Taro Yashima's Crow Boy (1955) represents

the concerns of all peoples struggling to become. Rejected by his peers for his differences, Crow Boy withdraws into an isolated world of daydreaming, nature-watching, and failures. It is the new teacher, Mr. Isobe, a model for emulation, who helps him to develop abilities and to achieve success, recognition, confidence, and self-worth.

Another book which epitomizes the conflicts evoked by cultural differences, Susan Hinton's The Outsiders (1967), provides insight into the lives and feelings of those who know what it is like to exist outside of the cultural mainstream. To Hinton's protagonist, Pony Boy Curtis, and his brothers Soda and Darry, orphans, survival is a perpetual vigil against the simmering hatred and violent eruptions of the West Side rich gang, the Socs. Frustrated by the irrational prejudice against their poverty, Pony Boy and his friends long to be judged on their internal qualities. Eventually they illustrate that awareness of human universalities can build communication between ostensibly incompatible groups.

Some writers, many of them creators of picture books, inspire identification, insight, and change through depicting the beautiful family and religious rites and rituals of cultures and peoples. One of these writers, Leo Politi, evokes much empathy and appreciation of the Mexican-Americans in California through his realistic and authentic texts and illustrations about children celebrating life within a Spanish ambience. In his Song of the Swallows (1949) Politi reveals the mystery of a legend and feast day very important to Mexican-Americans, the annual return of the swallows to San Juan Capistrano Mission on Saint Joseph's Day,

March 12, and of the very special relationship between young Juan and the old bell ringer, Julian. In Pedro, the Little Angel of Olvera Street (1946) Politi pays an aesthetic tribute to the oldest street in Los Angeles, restored to preserve its early Spanish ambience. Trough Politi's authentic portrayals, the reader experiences the street's artists at work and the traditional Posada procession led by Pedro in his angel costume.

Another picture book writer, John Steptoe, encourages readers to identify with black children growing up in the inner city. Steptoe's children could be children anywhere. It is their dialect and illustrations which make his books a black experience. In Daddy is a Monster...Sometimes (198C) Steptoe focuses on the varied relationships between a father and his two sons. In an era when literature about a black experience frequently depicts a family without a father, this book is commendable for its portrayals of a strong father-son relationship.

Chaim Potok portrays the Jewish culture in The Chosen (1967), the story of Danny Saunders, whose father is a Hasidic rabbi, keeper of an ancient tradition, and Reuven Malter, whose father is an Crthodox rabbi, despised by the Hasidim. The boys, brought together by an accident, share the conflicts of father and son and of late adolescence. The reader is led to identify with the novel's beautiful expression of humanity, love and respect between father and son, and importance of religious and intellectual traditions in the Jewish family.

Esteem for Self and Others whose lives may be defined differently than the norm may be enhanced through other fine books.

In Norma Simon's Why Am I Different? (1976) the reader is encouraged to feel that being different is perfectly acceptable and that each individual person is quite special. Differences in physical make-up, personality, and culture are presented to give readers an understanding of others and a stronger sense of self-worth. That different family styles and definitions are supportive, growing, and loving is shown in Simon's All Kinds of Families (1975). In this book nuclear, adoptive, multicultural, and divorced households are described and illustrated through natural events of family living: holidays, friendships, weddings, deaths, human failures, and breeches of love. One of these unique families, a one-parent home, is depicted with love and a perceptive statement in Charlotte Zolotow's A Father Like That (1970).

Other important literary works nurture positive attitudes about those who cannot accept the rationales for sex role stereotyping. In one of these books, Charlotte Zolotow's William's Doll (1972), William's desire for a doll arouses much fear and consternation among family and friends. His grandmother, however, understands that emotions cannot be stereotyped and buys him a doll--so that he will know how to be a good father one day. That two unconventional characters can form a beautiful friendship beyond sex roles is shown in Katherine Paterson's Bridge to Terebithia (1977). Jesse, a boy, is sensitive, artistic, and giving. Leslie, a girl, is the swiftest runner in the sixth grade, assertive, caring, and bold. Together they build an imaginative world which provides a creative haven from the demands of a rigid and conformist society.

It is important that readers experience identification

also with those literary characters who, though handicapped, are depicted as worthy and valuable people. In Sorrow's Song (1979) Larry Callen explores the feelings and attitudes expressed toward his mute heroine, Sorrow Nix, by revealing the reactions of those around her. Readers can compare the gamut of these reactions and identify with the theme of evaluating people on the basis of their individual worth and abilities, rather than by outward appearances. A similar theme is developed in Marguerite DeAngeli's The Door in the Wall (1949), which reveals Robin's despair over his twisted limbs, crippled by the Plague which devastates fourteenth century England. Robin never regains his former physical perfection. Nevertheless, he achieves knighthood for heroically assuming a beggar's disguise and seeking the military aid which saves his beseiged town.

Although much of young people's nonfiction tends toward the didactic, some excellent books inspire identification with heroines and heroes of various cultures who have made prominent contributions to humanity. In one of these books, Margery Facklam's Wild Animals, Gentle Women (1978), the reader can identify with eleven women who have devoted their lives to studying animal behavior, ethology. Included is Jane Goodall, the scientist who became famous because of her dedicated research with chimpanzees. In Bill Gutman's Duke: The Musical Life of Duke Ellington (1977) the reader is presented another life of dedication. This book not only encompasses the life and achievements of an American Musican from early childhood when he gained a "sense of pride in his heritage" through his musical contributions, it also is the story

of jazz in Black America.

Two Studies in Posacculturation:

In order to implement the model and program described in this paper, two pilot studies were designed to determine the perceived influences of literature on the beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of older adolescents. Thirty-one pre-service teacher education students in my children's literature classes were involved in the first study; fifty-six, in the second. I was particularly interested in observing what influences these students might perceive as a result of reading and critically analyzing books with a high probability of use in their future teaching assignments.

Each group read a number of children's and adolescent's books selected for their expression of personal and cultural concepts. These were books with the potential for posacculturation of knowledges, appreciations, attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors of (1) Self, (2) Others, (3) Pluralistic Peoples, and (4) Change.

After reading each book, the students engaged in a critical analysis structured by questions and creative expressions. At program completion, they rated each book on a scale of one to five against a set of the books' motifs and ranked all books according to their perceived influences. Across all books and motifs, the distribution ranged from 76.50% to 46.25% of students reporting positive influences. The motifs of greatest reported impact seemed to focus on the evolving self and the Self in relation to

Others. Those motifs focusing on Others, Pluralistic Peoples, and Change were areas of reported impact, but lesser. A correlation of +0.62 between ratings and rankings of books by motifs was significant beyond the 0.01 level (29df), indicating that student perception of the impact of the books' motifs was significantly related to perceived influences of the books as wholes.

A factor analysis of a series of intercorrelations of all books with all motifs provided three factors. The first accounted for 69.0% of the total variance and focused on values, beliefs, attitudes of the Self; the second, only 09.0% of the variance and focused on multicultural groups and Others; the third, merely 05.70% of the variance and revolved around change. Again, while the students believed that books do influence them, they approached these books within one major frame of reference.

At program completion, the students in Study II identified the three books, in order of impact, which they perceived to have the greatest influence on their values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of Self, Others, Pluralistic Peoples, and Change. In addition, each student wrote a rationale for each of his three choices, specifying the influence of each book. A content analysis was made of the students' rationales of their rankings. This revealed those books and motifs which the students perceived as most influential.

All students in Study II reported positive influences through reading. The largest area of perceived influence, as indicated in Study I, again was Self and Self in relation to Others (33.0%). The second and third areas of perceived influence, Others

(28.0%) and Pluralistic Peoples (25.6%) were reported almost as frequently, in contrast to Study I. Perceived influences relating to Change (15.0%) were reported less frequently.

The results of these two studies indicate that older adolescents perceive that their values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are still evolving and can be influenced by reading and critically analyzing books which espouse different philosophical and sociological meanings. The influences shown are important for several reasons. First, it is significant that students in a teacher education program, who will eventually assume responsibility for selecting literature and developing that literature's meanings with young people, perceive literature and specific literary motifs as influential. Second, the findings suggest that because influences do occur, and because adolescents believe that books do influence them, facilitators (from teacher educators to primary teachers) should choose books very carefully and analyze them critically and creatively. Third, such results have not been shown previously with this age group. Fourth, the findings of Aoki (1981), Aaron and Muench (1975), Biskin and Hoskisson (1977), Frankel (1972), Schwarz (1973), Fisher (1965), Loban (1953), Ahle (1983), and Norton (1982) that creative experiences and critical analyses were important for influences to occur were supported.

One is uncertain, however, of the permanence and duration of these expressed influences. It seems a rational assumption that, in lieu of being presented with literature opposing the expressed influences, they can endure indefinitely. By similar reasoning, it seems that with interjection of a new frame of refer-

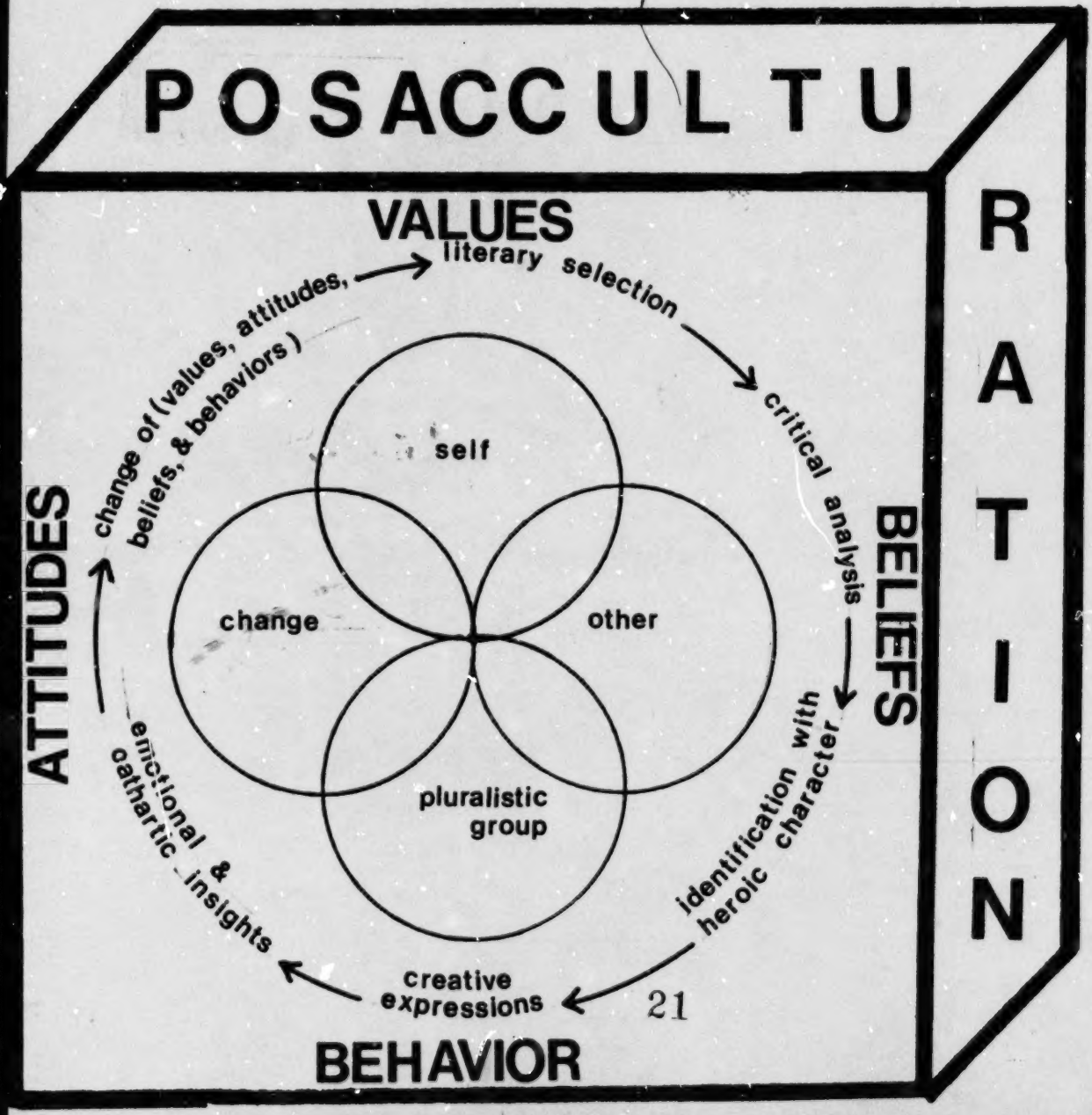
ence, a specific cultural emphasis, for example, a new influence can be effected.

Many related research questions, based upon limitations of the pilots, might be raised. To what extent will the perceived influences of literature reported by these teacher education students transfer to the classroom? What might the influences have been had other literary works and other motifs been selected? Another facilitator? Another program? Another design? What might the results of a replication of this study in another region indicate? Again, it will be the task of future research to answer these questions.

Summary:

The posacculturation model and program are presented as a creative process designed to heighten sensitivities to a global society which is becoming increasingly pluralistic. Through integration of the process into the already established curriculum, teacher awareness of the powers of literature to subtly perpetuate both positive and negative messages can be enhanced. Ultimately, application of the process can lead readers to identification with literary models, emotional and cathartic insights, and positive changes of values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors relative to Self, Others, and Pluralistic Peoples.

FIGURE 1 MODEL OF POSACCULTURATION



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